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ABSTRACT

A mainstreaming project was carried out in Toronto, Canada, in which four deaf students, ages 5 through 8, were integrated into a classroom of hearing students in grades 1 and 2, for 1 hour, 5 days a week, to participate in a writing program adapting the Graves-Giacobbe process writing model outlined in Donald Graves' "Writing Teachers and Children at Work." Both groups of children participated in all aspects of the writing program: writing, peer conferences, class conferences, mini-lessons, and sharing of finished pieces. Both teachers participated; the teacher of hearing-impaired students acted as both a teacher and a sign language facilitator. Both groups of students increased in their ability to express ideas in written form. It was discovered that no adjustments had to be made for students with hearing impairment to participate in peer conferences; they were able to confer effectively through their sign facilitator. Another discovery was that the hearing-impaired student's movement through developmental steps in spelling paralleled that of hearing students; both groups moved from early phonetic stages through transitional stages to the conventions of standard spelling in the same way. Samples of student writing at the different stages of writing development are provided. (BRM)

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PROCESS WRITING

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

with

THE HEARING IMPAIRED

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Evie Moskos
and
Connie Mayer

November 1988

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PROCESS WRITING

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH WITH THE HEARING IMPAIRED

Overview

In this program, hearing-impaired students integrate into a regular hearing classroom on a daily basis. The teacher of the deaf and the regular classroom teacher work as a team to provide a fully integrated approach to process writing. The program results in substantial academic and social gains for both groups of students. The program has yielded significant findings: hearing-impaired students are able to engage in peer conferences on the same basis as their hearing classmates and move through an almost parallel development from invented spelling to fully conventional spelling. The program is one of the few to use a process approach to writing with hearing-impaired children and is the only such program which implements process writing in an integrated classroom.

1. Age and Characteristics

Students:

- hearing-impaired students (ages 5 - 8) selected from the Metropolitan School for the Deaf, Toronto Board of Education. These students are deaf and use sign language as their primary means of communication.

- primary students (ages 5 - 8) from Davisville Public School, Toronto Board of Education. These students are in the regular Grade 1 and Grade 2 program.

Years of Operation: 1986 - 1987, 1987 - 1988, 1988 - 1989

2. Purposes

Academic:

- to provide for both hearing and hearing-impaired students a fully integrated, process approach to writing.

  Note: For the profoundly deaf child, speech is not always a viable means of interacting in the hearing world. Writing is essential. In the past, the teaching of writing in deaf education has focused mainly on dissecting language into small components: words, syllables and isolated

rules. This fragmented approach inhibits the purpose of langauge, 'the communication of meaning.' (Goodman, What's Whole in Whole Language, p. 8)

- to demonstrate to students that writing is an essential means of communication in both deaf and hearing communities.

- to introduce hearing students to a new language form: the language of signs.

Social:

- to provide deaf students with a model of the larger hearing community with which they will have to find ways to interact.

- to show hearing students the similarities and the differences between themselves and their deaf classmates.

- to promote an acceptance of the hearing impaired as full members of society.

3. **Methods and Procedures**

This program is an adaptation of the Graves-Giacobbe process-writing model as outlined in Donald Graves' Writing Teachers and Children at Work.

Four hearing-impaired students integrate into the regular hearing classroom for one hour, five days a week. The regular classroom teacher and the teacher of the deaf work as a team. The two groups of children participate in all aspects of the writing program: writing, peer conferences, class conferences, mini-lessons and the sharing of published pieces. The teacher of the deaf acts as both a teacher and a sign language facilitator.

At the beginning of the class, children get their individual writing files and choose an appropriate place in the room to begin writing. The teachers circulate and consult with individual students, helping them to focus on the task at hand. During this time, a variety of activities occur: writing a first draft, peer conferences, editing and illustrating written pieces.

When finished writing, students indicate, by signing their names on a chart, that their piece is ready for publication and that they would like an extended conference with the teacher. The classroom teacher confers with the hearing students while the teacher of the deaf confers with hearing-impaired students. Conferences focus on revising the student's writing for meaning or on preparing the piece for publication. A student may also

choose to have a class conference. This conference occurs near the end of the class. The student author takes 'the author's chair' and reads his or her piece to the class. The other children assist the author in clarifying or extending the piece of writing. From previous pupil-teacher conferences, children know the kinds of questions to ask and suggestions to make. The children also use the author's chair as a place to share published pieces.

The final stage in the class is a mini-lesson. The teaching team selects one element of the writing which has been difficult for the class and 'models' techniques that the children can use to improve their writing.

The designated writing time includes an integrated recess break so that the hearing and hearing-impaired children have an opportunity to interact in a less formal way.

4. **Materials and Equipment**

Beyond normal classroom supplies - pencils, paper, markers, etc. - no special materials or equipment are needed. Where the hearing-impaired children are profoundly deaf and rely completely on a manual mode of communication, the services of a sign language interpreter are essential. In our situation, the teacher of the deaf also functions as the sign language facilitator so that no extra staff is required.

5. **Evaluative Methods**

Evaluation is carried out by collecting samples of each student's writing on an on-going basis. The pieces are dated and kept in file folders. These folders become a cumulative record of a each student's progress. The development of the writing is analyzed by the teaching team and an assessment of each child's growth over time is made. (See samples 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B attached.) In addition, the teachers of both groups use standardized tests in spelling and language such as 'The Durrell Graded Spelling Test' and 'The Grammatical Analysis of Elicited Language' (GAEL).

A video tape of class activity was made in May, 1988 and proved to be an effective evaluation tool. The video recorded the children's ability to concentrate on the writing task and highlighted the interactions that occurred in both peer and class conferences. It provided useful data for both student and program evaluation. This video tape is available upon request.

6. **General Comments: Impact and Significant Findings**

Impact:

For hearing and hearing-impaired children, the program has both an academic and social impact. As they become familiar with the process-writing approach, the children increase dramatically in their ability to express ideas in a written form. With this academic development comes social growth. The ability to write gives children the power to convey their thoughts, feelings and opinions in an important new way and this power allows them to effect change in their world and gives rise to new feelings of confidence and independence.

The effects of this new power were evident in our classroom. Hearing and hearing-impaired children acknowledged a new respect for each other and members of the integrated class began exchanging written messages. Such effects extended beyond the classroom. One hearing-impaired child wrote her mother a note pointing out that her lunch was consistently the same to the point of being 'boring.' The mother, delighted with the written communication, responded by providing a change of menu. For this child, the ability to communicate in writing provided a new way to change her world. She became active rather than passive with respect to the conditions of her life.

Significant Findings:

At the beginning of our program we believed that many elements of the Graves' process-writing model - topic selection, teacher conferences, editing, and writing folders - could be successfully used with both hearing and hearing-impaired student writers. We did, however, believe that two components of the model would present problems for the hearing-impaired: peer conferences and invented spelling. As the program unfolded, we discovered that with respect to peer conferences for the hearing impaired no adjustments had to be made. Deaf children through their sign facilitator were able to confer with the same effectiveness as their hearing classmates.

An even more surprising finding emerged with respect to invented spelling. As our cumulative files began to grow, a definite pattern began to emerge. The developmental steps in spelling though which the hearing-impaired children moved paralleled those of the hearing children. Both groups moved from the early phonetic stages, through transitional stages to the conventions of standard spelling. (See attached samples: 3A and 3B, 4A and 4B, 5A and 5B.) As our program moves into its third year, we intend to collect additional

samples to verify the existence of this parallel development.

7. **A new approach**

This program set out to provide a new setting and a new methodology for teaching writing to hearing and hearing-impaired children. To our knowledge, few writing programs for the hearing-impaired use the Graves process-writing approach. Teller and Lindsey, in 'Developing Hearing Impaired Students' Writing Ability: Martin Buber's Mutuality in Today's Classroom' (American Annals of the Deaf, December, 1987) have noted only two programs which utilize the Graves' approach in the USA. These are located at the Lexington School for the Deaf in Jackson Heights, New York and at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Up until this year, we have not been aware of any such program in Canada. We believe that our program is unique in so far as it implements the Graves' model in an integrated setting of hearing and hearing-impaired children.

8. **Significant improvements over a wider area**

The goals for this program are to provide academic and social gains for both hearing and hearing-impaired students. With respect to these goals, the program is succeeding to a very high degree. In addition, the teachers involved in the program benefit from each other's area of expertise: process writing and deaf education. From its earliest stages, the program has been supported fully by the school principals involved: Nick Tucci of the Metropolitan School for the Deaf; Mel Beyea, former principal of Davisville Public School; and Lorne Brown, present principal of Davisville Public School. All three principals have provided support and encouragement to the program and see it as an innovative and significant opportunity for both the children and teachers involved. Other teaching colleagues have shown interest in the program and have visited the classroom to observe its operation. More important still, elements of the program are now used in other classes at the Metropolitan School for the Deaf. In November, 1987, we presented the approach to teachers of the deaf at 'Interacting 87,' a conference at the School for the Deaf in Milton, Ontario and we were selected to present the model to special education teachers from across Ontario at 'the Second OISE Conference on Exemplary Practices in Special Education' in May, 1988.

For our immediate purposes, the most significant effect is that as the students who were with us have moved to new classes, their teacher of the deaf and classroom teacher have emerged as a new teaching team eager to carry on the program with them.

As we begin our third year of the program, we look forward to introducing a new group of student writers to this integrated program.

Sample 1 A and B

Sample 1A = hearing student age 6 - January 1987

Sample 1B = hearing impaired student age 6 - January 1987

Length of Piece

- pieces are short - one or two sentences

Content

- student makes an observation
- topic not developed
- no detail

Complexity of Sentences

- only simple sentences used
- hearing impaired student reversed the order of subject and verb

Punctuation

- no punctuation was used

Spelling

- initial and final consonants
- used dashes for unknown words
- hearing student used interior consonants and blends

Other Elements

- no titles
- no editing

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Sample 2 A and B

Sample 2A – Year/Yrs student age 8 – Girl (GSE)

Sample 2B – Year/Yrs Special Needs student age 7 – Girl (GSE)

Length of Piece

- Please see Sample – Word Bias (-1) difference

Content

- Narrative style
- Basic (-1) description
- Direct (no-label) and characters are used

Complexity of Sentences

- Variety of sentence patterns used – Embedded information in the main sentence (1/2) (Please)

Punctuation

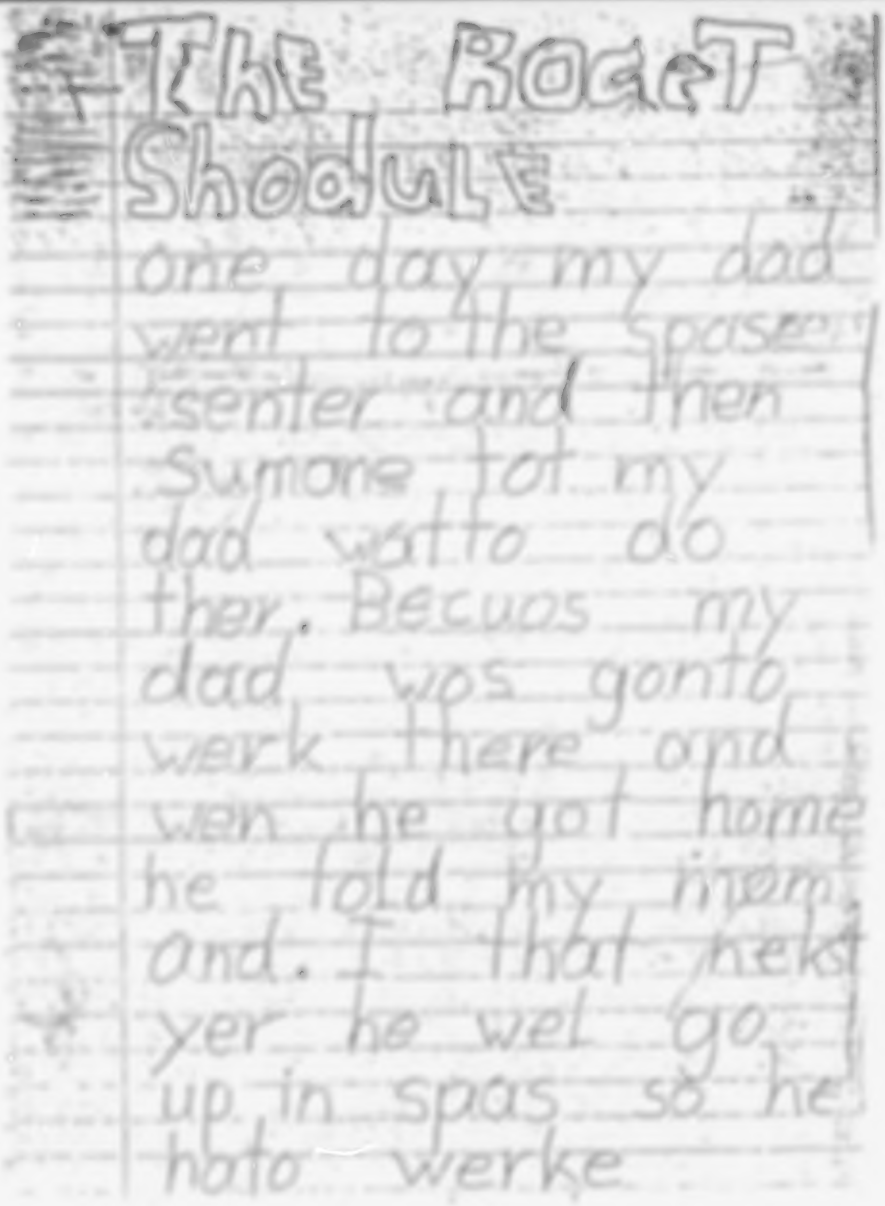
- Capital letters
- Full stop
- Question marks

Spelling

- Understanding of learned and needed spelling
- Girls', Trust and teacher observations
- Greater use of blends and digraphs and learned next structures

Other Elements

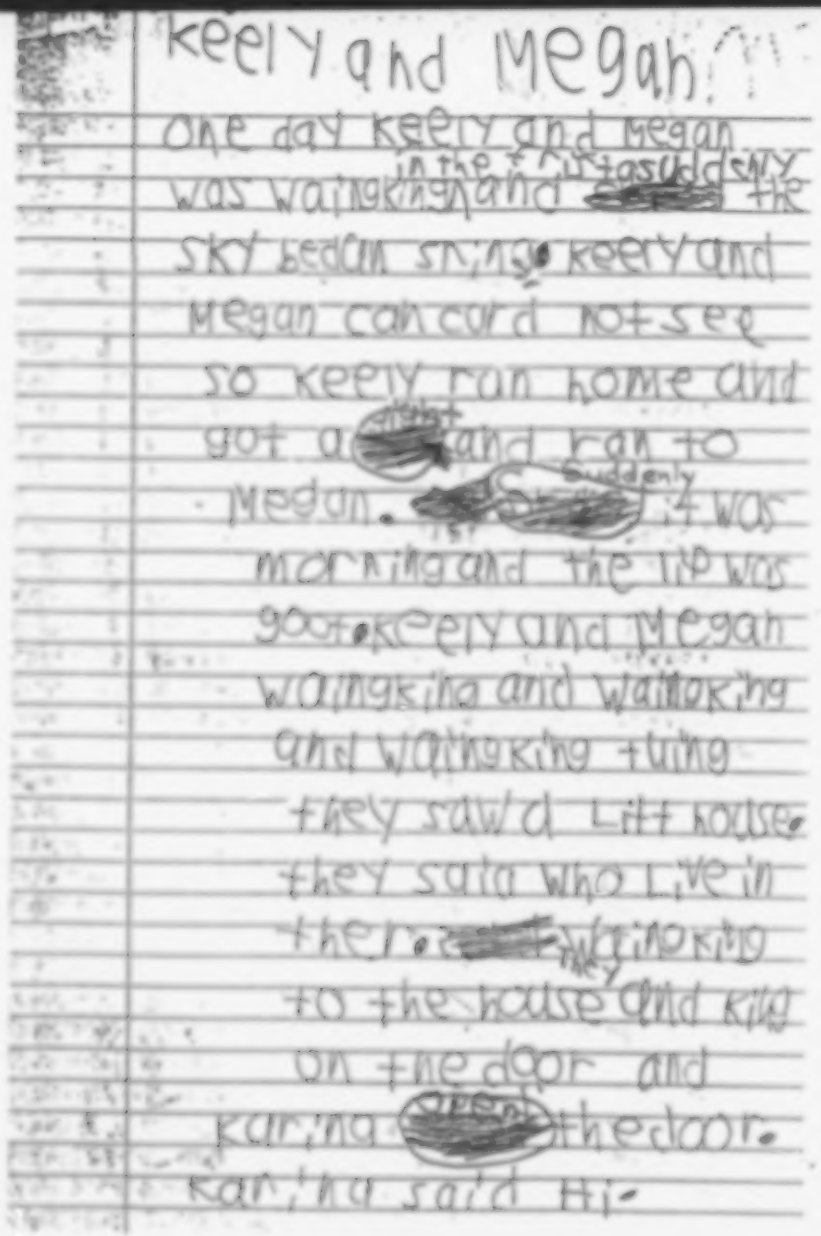
- Please approximately (1/2)
- Please edited



Sample 2A

The Rocket Schedule

One day my Dad went to the space centre and then someone taught my Dad what to do there. Because my Dad was going to work there and when he got home he told my Mom and I that next year he will go up in space so he had to work .....


keely and megah

one day keely and megan was walking in the forest and suddenly the sky began sting. keely and megan can curd not see so keely ran home and got a light and ran to megan. suddenly it was morning and the lit was goo. keely and megan walking and walking and walking and walking tuing they saw a litt house. they said who live in there walking key to the house and knig on the door and karina open the door. karina said Hi.

Sample 28

Keely and Megan

One day Keely and Megan were walking in the forest and suddenly the sky became dark. Keely and Megan could not see so Keely ran home and got a light and ran to Megan. Suddenly it was morning and the light was gone. Keely and Megan walked and walked and walked until they saw a little house. They said who lives in there. They walked to the house and knocked on the door and Karina opened the door. Karina said hi.

Sample 3 A and B

Sample 3A - hearing student age 6

Sample 3B - hearing impaired student age 5

Early Phonetic Stage

- both used initial consonants
- hearing student used final consonants
- hearing impaired student used a picture to represent an unknown word

Sample 3A

I DAI STW R K NS
ISCRMROE

Sample 3B

Sample 4 A and B

Sample 4A - hearing student age 6

Sample 4B - hearing impaired student age 6

Transitional Stage

- initial, final and interior consonants
- blends
- digraphs
- improved vowel discrimination

2 CLEFD gets a jo
ons a Boh a tim Tel
Wos a Dog hande
CLeFDe. He Wes
very Bege and
red. Bot The
on Ten Wes
TaTh He KaBe

Sample 4A

MY Bad BABY

on sunday MY BABY POWER was in his waher and waher in the Bedroom towende and PULY the PRISTA FROM and MY MOMMY said to him NO dock not PULY the FLOWIBUT the BABY sitt PULY and MY MOM stPitt him on the mont; and he stUr to cry thet he stop cry. The end

Sample 4B

Sample 5 A and B

Sample 5A - hearing student age 7
Sample 5B - hearing impaired student age 7

Standard Spelling Stage
- full spelling of most words

1. Sample 5A

Sally

Sally is one of my best friends in the class because she plays with me a lot of times and she likes doing Activities and she makes me happy a lot of times and it makes me happy. Sally and I like each other alot. We played a lot together. And it was fun.

Sample 38

Wednesday January 20 188

Dear daddy and Grandpa

I am sorry Theay you are away Truly. I scratched my eye and at home I scratched my self on my hand on the wall church in the front of the house. Love from KARINA XOXO XOXOXOXOXO XOXOXOXOXOXO

Summary

Introduction

In this program, hearing-impaired students integrate into a regular hearing classroom on a daily basis. The teacher of the deaf and the regular classroom teacher work as a team to provide a fully integrated approach to process writing. The program results in substantial academic and social gains for both groups of students. The program has yielded significant findings: hearing-impaired students are able to engage in peer conferences on the same basis as their hearing classmates and move through an almost parallel development from invented spelling to fully conventional spelling. The program is one of the few to use a process approach to writing with hearing-impaired children and is the only such program which implements process writing in an integrated classroom.

Characteristics of Students

Two groups of students are involved in this project.
They are :

- hearing-impaired students (ages 5-8) selected from the Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf, Toronto Board of Education. These students are deaf and use sign language as their primary means of communication.
- primary students (ages 5-8) from Jamieville Public School, Toronto Board of Education. These students are in the regular Grade 1 and Grade 2 program.

Objectives

The objectives of the program are both academic and social:

Academic:

- to provide for both hearing and hearing-impaired students a fully integrated, process approach to writing.
- to demonstrate to students that writing is an essential means of communication in both deaf and hearing communities.
- to introduce hearing students to a new language form: the language of signs.

Social:

- to provide deaf students with a model of the larger hearing community with which they will have to find ways to interact.
- to show hearing students the similarities and the differences between themselves and their deaf classmates.
- to promote an awareness of the hearing impaired as full members of society.

Description

This program is an adaptation of the Gordon/Cazden process-writing model as utilized in Gould (1978) Writing Workshop and Children at Work.
Deaf hearing impaired students integrate into the regular hearing classroom for one hour. This gives a week to participate in all aspects of the process-writing program activity, peer conferences, class conferences, mini lessons and the sharing of published pieces. The teacher of the deaf acts as both a teacher and a sign language facilitator.
At the beginning of the class, children get their individual writing files and choose an appropriate place in the room to begin writing. The teacher circulates and consults with individual students, helping them to focus on the task at hand. During this time, a variety of activities occur: writing a first draft, peer conferences, editing and illustrating action pieces.
When finished writing, students indicate, by signing their names on a chart, that their piece is ready for publication and that they would like an extended conference with the teacher.
Conferences focus on revising the student's writing for meaning or on preparing the piece for publication. A student may also choose to have a class conference. The conference occurs near the end of the class. The student author takes "the author's chair" and reads his or her piece to the class. The other children assist the author in clarifying or extending the piece of writing.
The final step in the class is a mini-lesson which focuses on one element of the writing which has been difficult for the class.
The designated writing time includes an integrated recess break so that the hearing and hearing-impaired children have an opportunity to interact in a non-formal way.

Impact on Students

For hearing and hearing-impaired children, the program impact on academic and social aspects as they become familiar with the process-writing approach, the children increase dramatically in their ability to express ideas in a written form. With this academic development comes social growth. The ability to write gives children the power to convey their thoughts, feelings and opinions in an important new way and this power allows them to affect change in their world and gives rise to the feelings of confidence and independence.
Hearing and hearing-impaired children acknowledge a new respect for each other in the classroom and in the larger school environment.

Conclusion

With respect to the goals to provide academic and social gains for both hearing and hearing-impaired students, the program is succeeding to a very high degree. In addition, the teachers involved have grown each other's use of appropriate process writing and deaf students. Other teaching colleagues have been involved in the program and have visited the classroom to observe the operation. Two important skills, elements of the program are now used in other classes at the Metropolitan School for the Deaf. The program has instilled important feelings about the ability of hearing-impaired children to conduct peer conferences and about the development of their writing.
We believe that our program is unique in so far as it implements the Graves' model in an integrated setting of hearing and hearing-impaired children.

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